

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
October 27 - November 3, 2011

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1. [Presidents Obama, Sarkozy of France on Global Economy, Iran](#) (11-03-2011)

Remarks by President Obama and President Nicolas Sarkozy of France in a joint statement Convention Center, Cannes, France

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Well, it is wonderful to be back in France. And I want to thank my excellent friend and colleague, Nicolas Sarkozy, for his hospitality. He and I obviously have worked together on a wide range of issues since I've been President, and I always welcome his frank and honest assessment of the situations here.

It's also nice to be back visiting in France -- the last time I was in the south of France -- or the first time, rather, was as a college student, and I've never forgotten the extraordinary hospitality of the French people and the extraordinary views that are available here.

This morning, President Sarkozy and I reaffirmed our strong and enduring ties, and I've said on many occasions that France is not only our oldest ally, but also one of our closest, and I consider Nicolas to be an outstanding and trusted partner on the world stage.

I think it's no surprise that we spent most of our conversation focused on strengthening the global economic recovery so that we are creating jobs for our people and stabilizing the financial markets around the world. The most important aspect of our task over the next two days is to resolve the financial crisis here in Europe. President Sarkozy has shown extraordinary leadership on this issue. I agree with him that the EU has made some important steps towards a comprehensive solution, and

that would not have happened without Nicolas's leadership. But here at the G20 we're going to have to flesh out more of the details about how the plan will be fully and decisively implemented.

And we also discussed the situation in Greece and how we can work to help resolve that situation as well. And the United States will continue to be a partner with the Europeans to resolve these challenges.

We had the opportunity to also talk about a range of security issues. One in particular that I want to mention is the continuing threat posed by Iran's nuclear program. The IAEA is scheduled to release a report on Iran's nuclear program next week and President Sarkozy and I agreed on the need to maintain the unprecedented international pressure on Iran to meet its obligations.

And finally, I'm looking forward to joining Nicolas and service members from both of our countries tomorrow to celebrate the alliance between our two countries, which spans more than 200 years -- from Yorktown to Libya.

And finally, I want to make mention that this is our first meeting since the arrival of the newest Sarkozy, and so I want to congratulate Nicolas and Carla on the birth of Giulia. And I informed Nicolas on the way in that I am confident that Giulia inherited her mother's looks rather than her father's -- (laughter) -- which I think is an excellent thing. And so now we share one of the greatest challenges and blessings of life, and that is being fathers to our daughters.

So again, Nicolas, thank you for your friendship. Thank you for our partnership. And thank you for your gracious hospitality.

PRESIDENT SARKOZY: (As interpreted.) Well, you see Barack Obama's tremendous influence. For four years now, he's been explaining to me that to be a father to daughters is a fantastic experience -- he who has two daughters. So I have listened to him. As a matter of fact, I followed his example.

I must tell you that we had a heavy agenda because there is no lack of subjects for our concern. We need the leadership of Barack Obama. We need the solidarity and the support of the United States of America. We need joint common analysis as to the way we can put the world back on the path of growth and stability.

Together, President Obama and myself are trying to build the unity of the G20. And I wish to pay tribute to the United States for understanding about all the issues we'll be discussing over the next 48 hours, and in particular, the issue of the Greek crisis -- the difficulty that the euro is facing, the need to be hand-in-glove with the United States on the language of the final communiqué.

Again, I want to thank President Obama for his understanding on all matters, including that of a levy or a tax on financial transactions, where I think we found common ground, at least common analysis, mainly that the world of finance must contribute to solving the crisis that we are all facing today.

I also want to say how delighted I am that President Obama has agreed to stay a few hours after the end of the summit in order to participate in ceremonies to pay tribute to American and French troops who have fought together so many times throughout the course of our joint histories. And I'm delighted to have the opportunity to join President Obama in a television interview, because he is much loved and much liked here in France.

So we have a very heavy agenda ahead of us, and we'll have many opportunities to see you again and explain to you what decisions we've been led to take.

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Thank you very much.

2. Ambassador Rice at U.N. on Libya and International Criminal Court (11-03-2011)

Susan E. Rice, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations
New York, NY, November 2, 2011

Thank you, Mr. President, and let me join colleagues in congratulating you on taking over the presidency of the Council. We look very much forward to working with you and your delegation throughout the month, and we have every confidence in your able leadership.

And I want to join others in paying great tribute to Ambassador Ogwu and the delegation from Nigeria for their exceptionally skillful and wise management of the Council in the complex month of October.

I would like to begin by thanking the Prosecutor for his informative briefing and for his important contributions to laying the foundation for seeking the justice that Libyans so deserve.

The Security Council's decision to refer the situation in Libya to the Prosecutor reflected the importance that the international community attaches to ensuring accountability for the widespread and systematic attacks against the Libyan people that began in the dark days of February. Resolution 1970, adopted even as atrocities were being perpetrated, represented an historic milestone in the fight against impunity.

Justice and reconciliation efforts will be critical components of a successful transition that allows all of Libyan society to leave behind what has been, in many, many respects, a tragic and bloody past. An effective criminal justice system, with a competent judiciary and safeguards to guarantee humane treatment and due process, is crucial to the future of Libya. The new government must ensure that the rule of law, treatment safeguards, and due process protections are firmly in place.

Helping the Transitional National Council implement its commitments to respect human rights — and to proper detention procedures that meet Libya's international obligations — must be a very high priority. We emphasize the importance of ensuring that the human rights of all in Libya — including former regime officials and detainees — are fully respected during and after this transition period.

The victims of Qadhafi's terrorism and their families in Libya — and also in the United States — now know definitively that the era of Qadhafi's violence has ended. Qadhafi engaged in countless barbaric acts, but this does not and cannot justify the apparently brutal way that he met his death. We welcome the TNC's announcement of an investigation into Qadhafi's death and will look to it to follow through by undertaking an effective inquiry. Independent and impartial investigations into abuses committed in Libya on both sides are the first step in fulfilling the TNC's commitments to accountability and laying a foundation for a transition that embraces the rule of law. We remain deeply troubled by reports, including those mentioned by the Prosecutor, that sub-Saharan African migrants and others detained in ad hoc jails are being abused. Continued support by the international community, including through the UN Support Mission in Libya, will be vital to helping the Libyan people achieve the future they seek.

We must now move together to support the creation of an inclusive, democratic state in which all Libyans, of all backgrounds, have a future and an opportunity to participate in the rebuilding of their country.

We welcome the Prosecutor's report that the TNC is fully cooperating with his investigation in accordance with Resolution 1970, and we encourage other States in which individuals subject to ICC arrest warrants may be found to ensure that they are brought to justice. We encourage the Prosecutor to continue to consult with the TNC.

We urge the speedy apprehension of Saif al-Islam Qadhafi and of Abdullah al-Senussi, who remain at large in the region. They must be brought to justice in a legitimate process governed by the rule of law. Ensuring justice for those who have endured unspeakable atrocities will be crucial to Libya's ability to emerge from the ashes of dictatorship to become a country in which all of its citizens enjoy the full protection of the rule of law.

Thank you, Mr. President.

[U.S. Support for Democratic Transitions in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia](#) (11-03-2011)

3. Dempsey Calls for Increasing U.S. Partnership with Turkey (11-02-2011)

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

Washington — The United States and Turkey are allies with common interests on most issues and an increasing partnership, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said at the 30th Annual Conference on U.S.-Turkish Relations here yesterday. Army General Martin E. Dempsey called for the relationship between the two countries to continue expanding, acknowledging that they won't always agree.

"As our partnership grows ... we may have an occasional difference or two," Dempsey said. "That is OK. In fact, in some ways, this is healthy for two free and sovereign nations."

The biggest disagreement between the two nations occurred in 2003, when Turkey did not allow U.S. troops to transit its territory at the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Turkey is at the crossroads that serves as a bridge between eastern and western Europe and the Middle East. It has had a vibrant economy as the rest of the region has undergone recession. With new governments emerging in the Muslim world, Turkey — a secular state with a majority Muslim population — can serve as a positive role model to leaders in the Middle East, Dempsey said.

The chairman echoed Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, who spoke to the conference Oct. 31.

"I have to confess that some Americans, including quite a few on Capitol Hill, have questions about the future of this vital partnership," Clinton said. "And they wonder about its durability, and they wonder about the future role that Turkey will play in the region. I want to emphasize that the United States welcomes Turkey's growing role in the region and on the world stage."

“Now, we do not always see eye to eye,” she continued. “In fact, no two nations — or two friends, or even two members of the same family — ever do. But we are confident that as Turkey assumes the responsibilities that come with increased influence, our partnership will become even more productive in the years ahead.”

Turkey is a solid military ally that deployed a brigade to fight alongside U.S. troops in the Korean War, served as a steadfast ally during the Cold War and continues to play a constructive role with 1,800 service members in Afghanistan today, Dempsey said last night.

“Turkey has also positively engaged Iraq, working with Iraqi leaders to reinforce that nation’s emerging democracy and helping it rebuild,” the chairman added.

Terrorists have targeted both Turkey and the United States, Dempsey noted, and the two nations continue to work together to combat terrorism.

“Rest assured,” he said, “the United States stands with Turkey in this struggle, and we will continue to provide counterterrorism support and help crack down on terrorist activities around the world.”

Dempsey extended the sympathies and prayers of the 2.2 million men and women in the U.S. armed forces for the loss of life and devastation of the recent magnitude 7.2 earthquake in eastern Turkey.

“We’ve been very proud to play even a small part in helping you recover from that,” he said. “You know and can be sure that our country is committed to you as you recover and rebuild, and we’re proud to call you our friends.”

Dempsey said he is confident that the United States and Turkey will continue to focus on the common ground the two countries share to forge an even deeper partnership in the future.

“We must stay engaged and keep communicating,” he said, “because as our already strong relationship grows in breadth and depth, we have to move beyond the world of labels. We need to move beyond the old paradigms of East and West, Christian or Muslim, New World or Old World, and on to building a bold and bright and new future together.”

The chairman added a personal note, telling the audience that the day marked his one-year anniversary of being cancer-free. “Last year I had cancer,” he said. “You can’t imagine how that changes your perspective on things. It allows you ... to see things and empathize with people more than, perhaps, I’m sorry to say, I did before.”

Turkish Defense Minister Ismet Yilmaz attended the meeting after having met with Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta at the Pentagon earlier in the day.

“The two leaders discussed a broad range of mutually significant security issues, to include defense-industrial cooperation, foreign military sales, the common threat of terrorism and regional challenges,” Pentagon spokesman Navy Capt. John Kirby said in a written statement.

Panetta reassured Yilmaz of America’s commitment to a strong security relationship with Turkey, praised Turkey’s contributions to the training mission in Afghanistan and pledged to continue assisting in earthquake relief efforts, should that support be required, Kirby added.

[Deputy Secretary Burns at Istanbul Conference for Afghanistan](#) (11-02-2011)

[U.S., International Partners Meet to Support Afghanistan](#) (11-02-2011)
[Background Briefing on Meeting in Istanbul on Afghanistan](#) (11-02-2011)

4. U.S., South Korean Defense Chiefs Cite Strategic Progress (10-28-2011)

By Karen Parrish
Armed Forces Press Service

Seoul, South Korea — The United States and South Korea are taking additional steps to advance their military cooperation into a strategic alliance of bilateral, global scope, both nations' defense leaders said today.

Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta and his counterpart, South Korean Defense Minister Kim Kwan-jin, held a joint news conference at the South Korean defense ministry building here following the 43rd Security Consultative Meeting executive session. The meeting is an annual gathering of U.S. and South Korean military and foreign affairs officials.

"Our talks focused on a number of issues critical to strengthening and transforming the alliance, which remains vital to the interest of both of our nations and a cornerstone of stability in Northeast Asia," Panetta said.

The secretary said the two nations will "ensure a strong and effective alliance deterrence posture, including the United States' nuclear umbrella," to ensure North Korea never underestimates the alliance's will and capability to respond decisively to aggression.

The South Korean defense minister said the two nations are cooperating closely in matters of defense policy and in provocation response planning.

Both defense chiefs responded to the question of what they would have to see North Korea do with its nuclear program to bring it into compliance with the international community.

Panetta said denuclearization is an important area for North Korea to address if it wants to improve relations with the alliance.

"It's no secret that denuclearization means that they have to stop testing, they have to stop developing weapons, they have to stop enriching uranium in violation of international rules and requirements," the secretary said. "They have to allow inspections. It's all of those areas that would have to be addressed, and ... are in the process of being discussed with the North Koreans."

Speaking through an interpreter, Kim said a strong alliance force posture has proven to be an effective deterrent against further provocations such as North Korea's 2010 sinking of the South Korean vessel the Choenan and shelling of Yeonpyeong Island later that year.

Kim added it will only be possible to ease tensions on the Korean peninsula once North Korea itself feels the need to stop provocative behavior.

"Only then, I believe, will we be able to meet our objectives," the minister added. "Obviously this will take some changes in policy from the North Korean perspective. What we must do is to prepare ourselves with a robust defense posture that will respond very strongly if North Korea ever conducts additional provocations."

A joint communiqué issued after today's meeting stated areas of enhanced cooperation between the United States and South Korea include establishing an ongoing defense policy dialogue, increased combined military exercises on the peninsula, and closer cooperation in peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and similar efforts.

The two nations also will strengthen cooperation in the space and cyberspace domains and work to increase resilience of critical infrastructure, the communiqué stated.

Panetta and Kim both said cyber attacks are the battlefield of the future, and they intend to expand the scope of their cooperation in that domain to effectively respond to new and emerging threats.

Both defense chiefs also said they are on track with the strategic plan that calls for moving U.S. troops from Seoul to different facilities at Camp Humphreys, and to transfer operational wartime control to South Korean command. The nations have agreed to complete both actions by the end of 2015.

Panetta -- along with Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Army Gen. James D. Thurman, commander of U.S. Forces Korea -- also attended meetings earlier this week with Kim, South Korean President Lee Myung-bak and Foreign Minister Kim Sung-hwan.

U.S. and North Korean delegations met earlier this week in Geneva, but according to State Department officials, those meetings resulted in no agreements, and significant issues remain.

[Press Conference by Panetta, South Korea Defense Minister Kim](#) (10-29-2011)

5. Obama, Czech Leader Talk Security, Economic, Nuclear Cooperation (10-28-2011)

By MacKenzie C. Babb
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama and Czech Prime Minister Petr Nečas, in a White House meeting, discussed enhancing U.S.-Czech Republic security, economic and commercial ties and supporting democracy, open government and human rights around the world.

The October 27 meeting also highlighted energy and civil nuclear cooperation in particular, according to the White House.

“We confirmed our support for safe and secure nuclear power, and agreed that nuclear power is not only important for ensuring energy security, but also for reaching our goals on reducing carbon emissions,” the two leaders said [in a joint statement](#) following their meeting.

Obama and Nečas said their countries have a strong history of cooperation on nuclear security issues. [A White House fact sheet](#) said the two nations aim to build on that history by creating a civil nuclear cooperation center in Prague “to facilitate and coordinate joint work.”

“The center will build on current collaboration in the nuclear field,” the White House said in [a fact sheet on civil nuclear cooperation](#). “In addition to working on nuclear energy activities, experts

from both countries will continue to collaborate on nuclear security issues such as material control and accounting, physical protection and other safeguards.”

The White House also announced a series of exchanges between scientists from universities, research laboratories and secondary schools to promote continued cooperation in the nuclear energy field.

The two leaders also talked about their joint security efforts in Afghanistan, reviewed plans for the upcoming NATO summit in Chicago and discussed the new U.S.–Czech Republic Reciprocal Defense Procurement Agreement. Obama and Nečas said they intend to negotiate and sign the deal in the coming months to “facilitate trade in defense items and further strengthen bilateral commercial relations.”

Additionally, they discussed working together to support democracy, open government and human rights as countries across the Middle East and North Africa work toward political transitions. They also talked about the Czech Republic’s intent, announced in September, to join the 47-member Open Government Partnership.

The White House statement called the Czech Republic a “strong defender of human rights and democracy promotion worldwide,” and said the country has demonstrated its commitment to the Open Government Partnership by developing a domestic action plan and working within the organization to advance its values in the region and around the world. The United States and the Czech Republic are exploring the establishment of an Open Government and Democracy Center in Prague “to facilitate bilateral and regional cooperation,” the White House said.

Following the prime minister’s visit, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton congratulated the Czech people on the anniversary of their country’s independence October 28.

“On this special day,” [Clinton said](#), “I send my deepest congratulations to all Czechs and look forward to finding new ways to strengthen this already close relationship as we continue to promote our shared values around the world.”

6. Amb. Rice on Passage of U.N. Resolution 2016 on Libya (10-27-2011)

Remarks by Ambassador Susan E. Rice, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, at the Security Council Stakeout, on the Adoption of Resolution 2016 on Libya, October 27, 2011

Ambassador Rice: Good morning, everyone. We are quite pleased that the Security Council has unanimously passed Resolution 2016, terminating the protection of civilians and no-fly zone authorizations that were contained in historic Resolution 1973. This has been quite an extraordinary period of activity for the Security Council, as well as for the United States, NATO, and Arab partners who participated in the enforcement of Resolution 1973.

And today, many months later, we have the prospect for a free and inclusive Libya, in which the aspirations of the Libyan people can finally be realized in the wake of the transition that’s underway. We’re very concerned that, as we move forward, that the authorities make maximum effort to swiftly form an inclusive government that incorporates all aspects of Libyan society, and in which the rights of all Libyan people are fully and thoroughly respected, regardless of their gender, their religion, their region of origin, et cetera. But for the United States, and, I think, for the United Nations Security Council, this closes what I think history will judge to be a proud chapter in the

Security Council's history, and an experience where it acted promptly and effectively to prevent mass slaughter in Benghazi and other parts of the east, and to effectively protect civilians over the course of the last many months.

I'm happy to take a few questions.

Reporter: Given the level of pushback by Russia on Syria citing the Libya precedent, how long do you think this grudge is going to go on? How long is it going to be before the Security Council can take action on Syria?

Ambassador Rice: I don't think there's the relationship that some wish to ascribe between Libya and Syria. The fact is, these are different countries and, in different countries, certain members of the Security Council have differing interests. I think that the effort to use Libya as an excuse not to act in other contexts is not a fair one or an accurate one.

You will recall that there was no member of this Council that voted against Resolution 1973. And indeed, it was very clear, as we discussed and negotiated Resolution 1973, what the authorization of the use of force to protect civilians would entail. And we discussed it very concretely and plainly—we described thoroughly that this would entail active use of air power and air strikes to halt Qadhafi forces that were engaged in offensive actions against its people. And so there was no question that the members of the Security Council knew what they were voting for.

Now, undoubtedly, as this unfolded and occurred over the course of some months, there were those that found increasingly uncomfortable what it was they had agreed to. But to suggest that somehow they were misled is false. And if it is their judgment now that, for whatever reason, they are not prepared to respond effectively and robustly to the crisis underway in Syria, then they ought to be straightforward about the reasons for that and not use Libya as an excuse.

Reporter: Ambassador, if it was envisioned that weapons would be dropped to the rebels by members of the Security Council ... the South African ambassador just said that he believed those weapons are now proliferating and are part of the problem in Libya. Do you agree?

Ambassador Rice: I don't know anything about weapons being dropped. I know the United States did not provide any weapons to anybody in Libya. And I also would note that to the extent that weapons may have been provided by others, that was not precluded by Resolution 1973. And, obviously, we're all concerned about the importance of maintaining the weapons arsenals that Qadhafi's regime amassed and to limit the risk of MANPADS, chemical and biological weapons, if there are biological weapons, any other significant weapons, not falling into the wrong hands.

Reporter: There have been reports that South African agents are protecting the son of Qadhafi along the border. If these are in fact true, I mean, does this mean that the U.S. is going to follow up, given the amount of moralizing by South Africa on the mission?

Ambassador Rice: I've not heard those reports and I can't comment on their veracity. I'm sure South Africa, as a responsible member of this Council and the international community, would want to ensure that its nationals are acting in accordance with Council resolutions. And Council resolutions, at this stage, would require that, first of all, that these people are not supposed to be crossing borders, as there are travel bans on many of them. And secondly, in the particular case of Saif al-Islam, he is wanted by the International Criminal Court, to which, I believe, South Africa and others are signatories.

Reporter: About the killing of Qadhafi by the Libyan people, what do you think of the killing of ... ?

Ambassador Rice: Well first of all, I think we're all still unsure of what the precise facts of the circumstance of his death were. We welcome that the NTC has said that they will conduct an investigation into that, and we think that's necessary and important. As President Obama said the other night, nobody likes to see anybody meet an end as bloody as Qadhafi's was. But I think the most important thing, in addition to a significant and serious investigation, is looking to the future and all of Libyan society putting what has been, in many, many respects, a tragic and bloody past behind them. And moving together towards creating an inclusive, democratic state in which all Libyan people of all backgrounds have a future and have an opportunity to participate.

Thank you.

7. Clinton's Remarks at House Hearing on Afghanistan, Pakistan (10-27-2011)

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton
Opening Remarks Before the House Foreign Affairs Committee
Washington, D.C.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Thank you very much, Madam Chairwoman, and to Ranking Member Berman and to the members of the committee, I appreciate this opportunity once again to appear before you.

I want to start by recognizing the concerns that many of you have about Afghanistan and Pakistan policy. You and the American people are right to ask questions, but I think it's also important, as the Chairwoman alluded to in her opening statement, to recognize the significant results that our policy has already produced.

Usama bin Ladin and many of his top lieutenants are dead. The threat remains real and urgent, especially from al-Qaida's affiliates. But the group's senior leadership has been devastated and its ability to conduct operations greatly diminished. Many of our successes against al-Qaida would not have been possible without our presence in Afghanistan and close cooperation with Pakistan.

Now in Afghanistan, we still face a difficult fight, but coalition and Afghan forces have reversed the Taliban momentum in key areas. Afghan security forces have a long way to go, but they are taking more responsibility every day. And while the country still faces enormous challenges from poverty and corruption, our development efforts have bolstered the economy and improved lives.

You know the statistics. Ten years ago, fewer than a million students enrolled in Afghan schools, all of them boys; now more than 7 million, nearly 40 percent of them are girls. Afghans are better positioned to chart their own future.

I offer these very brief examples as a reminder that, as President Obama has said, we are meeting our commitments and we are making progress toward our goals. And we cannot let up. We should build on our momentum, not undercut our progress. Now I will be the first to admit that working with our Afghan and Pakistani partners is not always easy. But these relationships are advancing America's national security interests, and walking away from them would undermine those interests.

With that as context, let me report I have just completed a productive visit to both countries. In Kabul and Islamabad, I emphasized our three-track strategy of fight, talk, and build, pursuing all three tracks at once, as they are mutually reinforcing. And the chance of success for all three are greatly increased by strong cooperation from the Afghan and Pakistani governments. Let me briefly discuss each track.

First, the fight. Coalition and Afghan forces have increased pressure on the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, and other insurgents, including with a new operation in eastern Afghanistan launched in recent days. But our commanders on the ground are increasingly concerned, as they have been for some time, that we have to go after the safe havens across the border in Pakistan. Now, I will be quick to add that the Pakistanis also have reason to be concerned about attacks coming at them from across the border in Afghanistan.

So in Islamabad last week, General Dempsey, Director Petraeus and I delivered a single, unified message – Pakistan's civilian and military leadership must join us in squeezing the Haqqani Network from both sides of the border and in closing safe havens. We underscored to our Pakistani counterparts the urgency of the task at hand, and we had detailed and frank conversations about the concrete steps both sides need to take. I explained that trying to distinguish between so-called good terrorists and bad terrorists is ultimately self-defeating and dangerous. No one who targets innocent civilians of any nationality should be tolerated or protected.

Now, we are not suggesting that Pakistan sacrifice its own security; quite the opposite. We respect the sacrifices that Pakistan has already made. And it's important for Americans to be reminded, over the past decade, more than 5,000 Pakistani soldiers have been lost, and tens of thousands Pakistani citizens have been killed or injured. That's why we are pursuing a vision of shared security that benefits us all.

The second track is talking, and here too we are taking concrete steps with our partners. So in both Kabul and Islamabad, I reaffirmed America's strong support for an inclusive Afghan-led peace process. And we have been very clear about the necessary outcomes of any negotiation. Insurgents must renounce violence, abandon al-Qaida, and abide by the laws and constitution of Afghanistan, including its protections for women and minorities. If insurgents cannot or will not meet those redlines, they will face continued and unrelenting assault. And I want to stress, as I did in Kabul, that the hard-won rights of women and all Afghans cannot be rolled back, and the growth of civil society must be not be quashed.

Now, there is no doubt that the murder of former President Rabbani was a setback, but the Afghans strongly believe reconciliation is still possible and we support that as the best hope for peace and stability in the region. Pakistan has a critical role to play and a big stake in the outcome, so we look to Pakistan to encourage the Taliban and other insurgents to participate in an Afghan peace process in good faith, both through unequivocal public statements and by closing off the safe havens.

We are working with the Afghan Government to help them secure commitments from all of their neighbors to respect Afghan sovereignty and territorial integrity and to support Afghan reconciliation. This will be a key focus when I go to Istanbul next week to meet with regional foreign ministers. For our part, the United States is working with the Afghan Government to conclude a new strategic partnership.

And let me add, in response to the Chairwoman's question, in 2011 we had three Washington-led rounds of discussions, with the State Department leading an interagency team, including DOD, USAID, and the NSC. These discussions resulted in a text that is about 90 percent agreed to,

including strong commitments on economic/social development, democratic institution-building, human rights, anti-corruption, and other important long-term reforms.

Among other things, we envision establishing an Afghanistan-United States bilateral commission and associated implementation mechanisms to help our focus remain on what needs to be done during the transition process. Ambassador Crocker and General Allen are still working through some of the security cooperation issues with President Karzai. The negotiation is ongoing, but I want to assure the Congress that although we do not expect this to take the form of a treaty or to require advice and consent of the Senate, we will consult with you on where we are in this process, and I will ensure that anyone who wishes to get a full briefing will get one, and we will very much welcome your views.

And in response to Congressman Chabot's point, we anticipate having a transition that does include security components, not only from the United States, but also from NATO, commitments that were made at the Lisbon Summit. And again, we look forward to consulting with you on that.

And finally, the third track is building. Building what? Building capacity and opportunity in Afghanistan, Pakistan and across the region. Now, this is part of a clear-eyed strategy rooted in a lesson we have learned over and over again around the world – lasting stability and security go hand in hand with greater economic opportunity. People need a realistic hope for a better life, for a job, for a chance to provide for their families. So it is critical to our broader effort that civilian assistance continue in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, and I thank Congressman Berman for raising that. Yet, I will also be very clear that we have had to move rapidly and deeply to strengthen oversight and improve effectiveness, and I'll be happy to answer questions about that.

Early next week, I will be sending you a comprehensive status update on our civilian assistance detailing our plans to shift from short-term stabilization to long-term development.

Now as the transition proceeds and coalition combat forces leave Afghanistan, there need to be realistic hopes for development. So we are working to achieve greater agricultural productivity, greater exploitation in a way that benefits the Afghanistan people of natural resources, increasing exports, and strengthening the financial sector. I really want to underscore the point that Congressmen Berman made, which is really that we want to move from aid to trade. We cannot do that if we don't get Reconstruction Opportunity Zone legislation, which will lower tariffs on Pakistani and Afghan products, and the Enterprise Fund, which will not require taxpayer dollars. This is what we did in Central and Eastern Europe, and it was a big help in convincing people that the free market was the way to go.

And finally, we are pursuing a broader, long-term vision for regional economic integration that we call the New Silk Road. It's not just an economic plan. It talks about how we can get these countries that have so many problems with each other to begin cooperating. And to that end, I'm very pleased by the progress that both India and Pakistan are making on the commercial front and the progress in implementing the transit trade agreement between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

So those are our three tracks – fight, talk, and build – and we're on all of them simultaneously. We believe this is the best place that we can be in moving forward, and I look forward to answering your questions.
